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THE MATHEMATICS TEACHER

EDITED BY
W. H. METZLER

ASSOCIATED WITH
EUGENE R. SMITH MAURICE J. BABB

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EDITORIAL.

H.C.F. The methods spoken of in Mr. Hart's paper are excellent. The addition and subtraction method can be used even in Arithmetic, if the numbers to be factored are large. This method, however, allows still farther development.

If the H.C.F. of two cubics is to be found, eliminate the cubes, and factor the resulting quadratic; if of a cubic and a quartic, eliminate the fourth power in the quartic by use of the cubic times the letter of which it is a function, and the third power in the quartic by the cubic, and factor the resulting quadratic. Similarly any two functions can, by successive eliminations, of the highest powers, be reduced to a quadratic, unless the H.C.F. is of higher degree than the second, in which case it will show its presence by reducing the other function to zero.

This then, is a general method of finding the H.C.F. of two functions. It is, however, only the Euclidean method with two variations: it carries the method only as far as is necessary in order to get a factorable form, stopping, in general, at the quadratic; it uses elimination by subtraction, instead of division with its use of successive remainders. That elimination by subtraction is an easier idea than that of the division method can hardly be doubted; the proof also is simpler than in the other method. A comparison of the two methods gives an excellent idea of division as a form of subtraction.

Since the Euclidean method, with its ability to handle complicated examples in H.C.F., has, by common consent, been dropped from the curriculum, it would seem that one should not be tempted to carry even this more easily explained method too far, although it is of undoubted value in working out questions that are still of accepted type. S.

A TASK.

To be honest, to be kind, to earn a little and to spend a little less; to make upon the whole a family happier for his presence; to renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered; to keep a few friends, but these without capitulation; above all, on the same given condition to keep friends with himself; here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy.—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*